

THORNS 'N ROSES

From community submissions



Roses to:

German *Bundeswehr* troops who have been providing force protection on 6th Area Support Group installations since the departure of Task Force Keystone. Your professionalism and devotion to duty are greatly appreciated by those you are here to protect.

Michelle Saylor and everyone else who was involved in Stuttgart's recent Health, Fitness and Wellness Fair. The genuinely fun day was filled with health-related tips and resources, and was an excellent reminder that all force protection begins with fit, healthy personnel.

All community members who have demonstrated patience and understanding with the installation access control procedures and random antiterrorism measures implemented throughout the 6th ASG. Waiting in line at the gate may not be the best way to start one's day, but your cooperation helps to keep us all a bit safer.

Thorns to:

The driver who hit my car Jan. 20 in front of the Community Bank office on Panzer Kaserne. Sometime between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., you did extensive damage to both side panels as well as the back rim – and then didn't even have the common decency to report the incident.

(If anyone has any information about this act, please call 431-2436/civ. 07031-223-012.)

E-mail comments to citizen@6asg.army.mil or fax them to 421-2570/civ. 0711-729-2570.

Security is everybody's business

By Hugh C. McBride  
Commentary

A few weeks ago, I compromised the security of Patch Barracks.

Sure, putting two schools, a child development center, Headquarters, U.S. European Command and thousands of individuals at risk isn't something I'm necessarily proud of, but you've got to understand – to do otherwise would've wasted at least five minutes of my precious time.

The backstory

It was one of those bitterly cold German mornings that can cause an Ohio boy to yearn for the relative warmth of winter in the Great Frozen Midwest.

Though a toasty interior was a tantalizing enticement, I adhered to local law and didn't attempt to start my trusty Opel Vectra until I had scraped through the thick envelope of ice that had encased it overnight.

Imagine my disdain (frustration, tantrum, tirade) then, when I discovered at the end of my labors that the subzero temperatures and a failing alternator had collaborated to, shall we say, give my auto the morning off.

Faced with a 10-kilometer trudge to Patch Barracks, I instead opted to take my bare-bones German language skills out for a test run – and was actually successful at summoning a taxicab to my off-post residence.

Eight minutes and 18 euros later, I and my taxi were in line awaiting entry to Patch. As I watched the drivers in front of me hand identification documents to the gate guards, though, I realized with icy dread that the frozen fingers of wintertime were about to pull me back into their grasp...

The decision

Yes, just as feeling was finally seeping its way back toward the tips of my toes, it dawned on me that I was being

driven by a person who was not in possession of the paperwork necessary for unaccompanied access to the installation. Thus, I would either have to exit the cab and walk onto Patch, or else sign the driver on, be delivered to my destination, and then walk to the gate at some later point to verify that he had, indeed, exited Patch when he should have.

In other words, I was about to return to pedestrian-ville – and on this morning, that was a cold and lonely place to be.

The gate

While mulling my options and cursing my fate, though, a surprising thing happened. The guard at the gate checked my ID, glanced at the driver's license, looked in the trunk of the cab, and waved us through.

Two minutes later, I was in a warm building, waving a quick thank-you to an undocumented individual who now had unencumbered access to the installation.

The aftermath

As most readers are aware, Patch Barracks still stands. I have not seen my cab driver's mug shot on any CNN Special Reports (in fact, a few weeks later, he drove me to Patch again – although this time he had to get a visitor's pass at the gate), and I'm pretty sure he's not a threat.

In retrospect, even if a problem had occurred related to his time on post, I could have responded in that most American of manners: "It's somebody else's fault!"

Yes, a gate guard waved us through. (And no, my chauffeur didn't turn out to be a member of a terrorist organization.) But the fact remains that, in a moment of early-morning angst, I "passed the buck" and let someone with a uniform make a force protection decision that I didn't feel like dealing with.

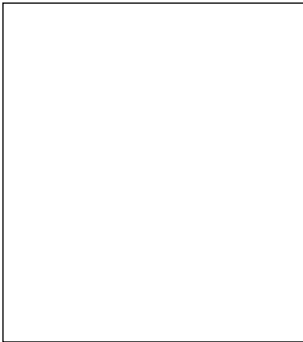
Like most of life, force protection is "won or lost" in the details: asking the "dumb" question, noticing the "innocent" anomaly, making the "unnecessary" extra effort.

And, occasionally, "wasting" the precious five minutes.

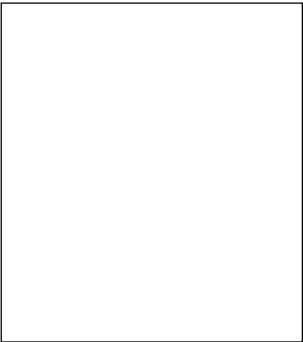
ON THE STREET

What is your most memorable force protection moment?

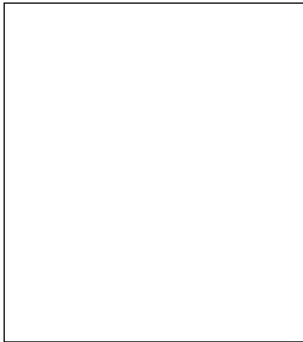
– Compiled by Maria Higgins and Melanie Casey



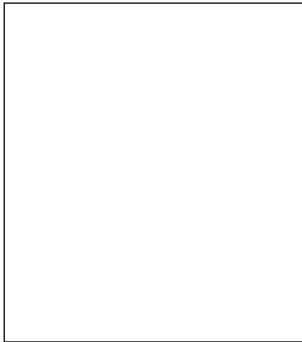
**Sgt. Pedro Rodriguez**  
(Provost Marshal's Office)  
When some National Guard guys said "Man, what MPs have to deal with all day. We don't know how you do it."



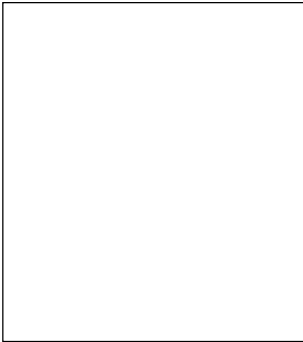
**Sgt. Gene Watson**  
(554th Military Police Co.)  
Every time I get told, "We appreciate you," even after people have been sitting in line while we search cars.



**Kenneth Osborne**  
(Provost Marshal's Office)  
Defending Aviano Air Base from 3,000 people trying to storm the gate after the 1998 gondola crash.



**Pfc. Kenny Lott**  
(554th Military Police Co.)  
During the holidays, when people give us cards – and little kids even give us their McDonalds toys.



**Pfc. Aaron Pepin**  
(554th Military Police Co.)  
When a guy refused to show me a second ID, I told him he'd have to leave. Then he produced a second form.



**Rainer Volkrodt**  
(Pond Security Service)  
A carload of high-ranking officers had to wait in line, but instead of being angry, they said they were grateful for us.



**Sgt. Mark Reeves**  
(National Guard)  
A woman who didn't have her ID after walking her dog was almost in tears when I told her I couldn't let her on.



**Spc. Mika Gant**  
(Army)  
Four local nationals tried to get on post by telling me they had security guard applications to drop off.

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For advertising information call 349-8443/civ. 06155-601443. For classifieds call 349-8447/civ. 06155-601447.

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